



Dear Members of the Higher Education Committee of the Connecticut General Assembly:

We CT Students for a DREAM call on the members of the higher education committee to pass and vote favorably on Senate Bill 398 AN ACT ASSISTING STUDENTS ACCEPTED INTO THE DEFERRED ACTION FOR CHILDHOOD ARRIVALS PROGRAM WITH THE COST OF COLLEGE.

This bill would open access to financial aid for undocumented Connecticut Students.

CT Students for a DREAM is a statewide organization of undocumented youth and allies that seek to fight for the rights of undocumented youth and their families and empower them through community organizing, leadership development, and advocacy.

We as an organization support any legislation that takes vital steps towards education equality including, but not limited to, opening access to institutional and state financial aid to undocumented students, broadening the number of students eligible for in state tuition and creation of an alternative to the FAFSA that allows undocumented students to get fair and equal access to financial aid.

Connecticut Students for a Dream has been actively working on higher education access and equality since our founding as an organization, particularly on expanding access to higher education for undocumented youth.

Many undocumented Connecticut high school students hope to pursue higher education. Unfortunately, many are unable to achieve this dream because they are ineligible for all federal and state need-based financial aid. The 2011 legislation that granted in-state tuition rates to some undocumented students was an important first step toward increasing access to higher education. That is not enough, many immigrant students and their families remain unable to afford the high cost of tuition—whether at in-state or out-of-state rates. Without access to financial aid, higher education remains out of reach for many of our brightest students.

Through our organization “College Access Program” and our work to help students achieve their dream of going to college, we’ve seen firsthand the difference that an education can make in a student’s life, and consider it our duty to expand higher education access for all Connecticut high school students.

Extending financial aid to undocumented students is an investment in the future of Connecticut. A realistic path to college will result in improved high school graduation rates and increased college matriculation. Further, it would will increase state revenue, in the short term through tuition from new students and in the long term as the higher incomes of these college graduates translate to increased taxes each year.

We hope the committee votes favorably on SB 398,

CT Students for a DREAM

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